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THEY'LL COME BACK BETTER

They say we'll come back callous when our service here is done;
They say we'll come back hard and rough and rude;
They say our better natures will be dulled by what we've seen,
Our very instincts bestial and crude.
They talk about the problem that they'll have upon their hands
When Peace shall end our present usefulness;
They cry, "Think what a million discharged troops will mean to us—
A menace to our girls—and boys no less."

We were men ere we enlisted—we are doing men's work here—
Shall we then be less than men when we return?
Shall the others reap the benefit of all our sacrifice,
And then ourselves, like thieves and outcasts, spurn?
Yes, our hands are red with slaughter, but our hands are free from stain;
We kill, but do we love the work? Not one,
And when the boys come back again, forget all else but this—
That each of us is some good mother's son.

—A Toronto Boy in the Princess Pats.